

This diagram shows a cross-sectional view of a pressure transducer assembly. The assembly consists of a **FRONT ENCLOSURE** (20) and a **BACK ENCLOSURE** (26) which houses the **TRANSDUCER** (34). The transducer is positioned between the front and back enclosures. The front enclosure features a top surface (36) with a series of vertical channels or slots (40, 42, 50) and a bottom surface (44). The back enclosure has a top surface (44) and a bottom surface (38) with a series of vertical channels or slots (46). The entire assembly is shown in a cross-sectional view with hatching indicating different materials or components.

COMMUNICATIONS TERMINAL
HAVING A SINGLE TRANSDUCER
FOR HANDSET AND HANDSFREE RECEIVE FUNCTIONALITY

5 Field of Invention

 This invention relates to a communications device such as a wireless terminal and more particularly to such a device wherein a single transducer provides both receiver (handset) mode and loudspeaker (handsfree) mode operation.

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Background of Invention

 Communication devices including wireless terminals for personal communication systems and the like conventionally use a single receiver which is held close to the user's ear during operation for both privacy and good audio quality. Recently, however, devices have been developed which also include a loudspeaker, either as an integral part of the handset, or as an accessory, to provide either just handsfree listening or as part of a complete handsfree (transmit and receive) function. Users of such telephone services as voice mail and automated answering systems often find it more convenient to navigate these systems through the use of the dial pad while listening to the instructions through the loudspeaker as opposed to continuously moving the handset away from the ear to see the dial pad. This becomes even more important when the terminal has an integral display which the user needs to see and perhaps write on while listening.

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 In the interest of conserving space and minimizing component and assembly costs it would be advantageous to provide both the handset or receiver function and handsfree or loudspeaker mode with a single transducer. At the same time, of course, the audio quality must satisfy various industry standards and meet user expectations while the terminal is either closely or loosely coupled to the ear in handset mode or at some distance from the user's ear in handsfree mode.

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Prior Art

As indicated previously, some manufacturers of wireless terminals have both handset and handsfree
5 functionality in their products. These products, however, achieve the dual mode operation through the use of separate transducers for each function. It is known to use "leak-insensitive" or "low acoustic output impedance" receivers in terminals in order to provide good audio quality when the
10 handset is loosely coupled to the ear. These terminals, however, do not provide handsfree functionality.

Summary of the Invention

It is an object of the present invention to
15 provide a communications terminal having a single transducer for both handsfree and handset receive functionality.

It is a further object of the invention to provide the dual mode functionality through the use of a specially
20 configured transducer enclosure.

Therefore, in accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a communications terminal having a transducer to provide receive mode and
25 loudspeaker mode functionality. The terminal has a housing in which is located a transducer enclosure. The enclosure has first and second chambers separated by a partition with a transducer mounted on the partition. Each of the first and second chambers has at least one strategically
30 positioned and shaped acoustic port communicating with the exterior of the terminal.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention the communications terminal is a wireless terminal for a
35 personal communication system. The enclosure is incorporated into the terminal such that the acoustic ports are in the housing of the terminal.

In accordance with a second aspect of the invention there is provided a transducer enclosure for use in a communications terminal. The enclosure has first and second chambers separated by a partition. A transducer is mounted on the partition, the transducer being configured to operate in both handset and handsfree mode. The first and second chambers each have at least one acoustic port communicating to the exterior of the enclosure.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention will now be described in greater detail with reference to the attached drawings wherein:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a wireless terminal in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is a back view of the terminal; and

FIGURE 3 is a cross-sectional view of the transducer/enclosure.

FIGURE 1 illustrates one example of a wireless terminal such as might be used in a personal communication system. It is to be understood that the invention has equal application in other types of communication devices such as cordless terminals and pagers.

As shown in FIGURE 1, terminal 10 includes a case or housing 12, having a transmit end 14 and a receive end 16. Positioned close to transmit end 14 is a transmit transducer 18 for converting audio into an electrical signal. A receive transducer 20 is located proximate receive end 16. FIGURE 1 also illustrates display 22 and key pad 24 as known in the art.

As shown more clearly in FIGURE 3, receive transducer 20 is located within transducer enclosure 26 which in a preferred embodiment is cylindrical. It is to be

understood, however, that the enclosure may have other configurations in plan such as square, rectangular or elliptical.

5 In the illustrated embodiment the enclosure has a partition 28 which divides the enclosure into two chamber 30,32. The transducer is mounted in or coaxially with an opening 34 in partition 28. It will be noted that in FIGURE 3 the two chambers do not have equal volumes by virtue of the partition being closer to one end of the cylinder. Top 36 and bottom 38 close each of the chambers. It will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the top 36 and bottom 38 can be part of the terminal case 12 wherein the cylindrical member is sealed directly to the inner surface of the case. It should also be noted that the dimensional relationship between the two chambers is not critical but is a function of other acoustic properties of the enclosure including number, size and location of the acoustic ports to be described in greater detail later.

20 Transducer 20 in an exemplary embodiment is a twenty eight mm diameter flat loudspeaker. Enclosure 26 and partition 28 can be molded or otherwise formed of the same or similar plastics material as used for the terminal casing.

25 In the embodiment shown in FIGURE 3 front chamber 30 has an approximate volume of 2cc and back chamber 32 has an approximate volume of 5cc.

30 Chamber 30 as shown in FIGURE 3 is located towards the front face of the terminal. Chamber 30 is provided with an arrangement of apertures or ports 40 aligned with the transducer 20. The ports 40 are all located within a circular portion 41 of the top face such that they are easily sealed within the knife-edge of a frequency response testing artificial ear. As shown ports 40 are generally

aligned with the opening 34 in partition 28 so as to provide a clear path for the sound waves from the transducer to the user's ear. FIGURE 3 shows a second set of ports 42 in the front chamber 30 located just outside the boundary of the knife-edge and these ports are not sealed during frequency response testing. A third port 44 in chamber 30 exits through the side of the enclosure or casing where it is unlikely to be inadvertently sealed or blocked by the user. The exact location of ports 42 and 44 is not critical although they will be separated from ports 40 so that they will not be coupled to the user's ear in the handset receive mode and positioned such that they will not be otherwise inadvertently covered by the user. It is also within the scope of the present invention to combine ports 42 and 44 into one slot or set of slots at selected locations such as at or near the parting line of the mold used to form the terminal casing.

In an exemplary embodiment there are thirteen ports 40 each having a diameter of approximately 2mm. Ports 42 outside the knife-edge of the artificial ear are preferably two slits each 2mm wide and 21mm long. It will be apparent that the slits can, however, be made of circular apertures or other arrangements of slits. Port 44 at the side of the enclosure or terminal casing is a single slit 1.5mm wide and 40mm long. As before this port can be made up of other arrangements of slits as long as the two areas are approximately equal to the area defined by the aforementioned slit.

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Back chamber 32 has a set of ports 46 (FIGURE 2) to the back face of the terminal. In the exemplary embodiment the ports 46 comprise fifteen holes, each having a diameter of approximately 2mm. The various acoustic ports discussed above provide frequency response shaping. Port 44 in front chamber 30 also provides acoustic safety by ensuring that when the terminal is well coupled to the

user's ear sufficient acoustic energy is shunted. As before ports 44 can be formed by a single slot or a set of slots located in the back face, side wall or in the parting line.

5 Acoustic resistance material such as an acoustic screen 50 over certain sets of ports also provides frequency response shaping and minimizes the effects of any resonances between the ports and the chambers.

10 It is also within the scope of the present invention to place acoustic foam in one or both of chamber 30,32 in order to increase the effective volumes and minimize the effects of any resonances.

15 As discussed previously, enclosure 26 can be closed by means of integral top and bottom members although in a practical implementation the front and back faces of the terminal housing or casing will be used. It is also within the scope of the invention to arrange other
20 components within the terminal housing so as to form the appropriate chambers. In this case it will be necessary to configure the physical dimensions of the various ports and to select the proper characteristics of the acoustic resistance material and foam to accommodate some effects due
25 to internal channels and cavities created by circuit boards and the other components. This implementation may also require the addition of, or an adjustment to, the electronic equalization.

30 In operation, the transducer provides good audio quality to the user in handset mode while the terminal is loosely or firmly coupled to the user's ear. In handsfree mode the output of the audio amplifier is increased to raise the level of the audio sufficiently to allow the user to
35 hear the calling party while holding the terminal well away from the ear. There may also be some adjustment of the

electronic equalization of the amplifier circuit in order to adjust the frequency responses.

To ensure acceptable audio for the three modes of operation, i.e. handset receive mode with terminal tightly held to the user's ear; handset receive mode with the terminal loosely coupled to the user's ear and; handsfree receive mode, the output audio level as a function of frequency must fall within a certain range. It is within the scope of the present invention to achieve this range by the design of the transducer enclosure and acoustic ports. It is also within the scope of the invention to employ appropriate amounts of electronic equalization i.e. shaping the frequency response electronically, to achieve the required amplifier output over the desired audio frequency range. Ideally, the frequency response is substantially flat over the frequency range 300Hz to 3300Hz. Electronic equalization can also be used, in conjunction with the acoustic ports, to provide for changes in the output levels between the handset and handsfree modes of operation to ensure that the amplitude associated with handsfree receive is not directed to the user while the terminal is held loosely or tightly against the user's ear.

The terminal may be equipped with a manual switch to select as between handset and handsfree mode. In a preferred embodiment, however, the terminal will have a proximity detector which automatically switches modes depending on the proximity of the terminal to the user's ear. Details respecting the proximity detector and safety switch may be found in co-pending U.S. Application Serial No. 08/615,908 filed March 14, 1996 by A. Van Schyndel. The contents of U.S. Application No. 08/615,908 are incorporated herein by reference.

While the preferred embodiment of the invention has been described and illustrated it will be apparent to

one skilled in the art that variations in the design may be made. The scope of the invention, therefore, is only to be limited by the claims appended hereto.

WE CLAIM:

1. A communications device having a casing defined by a front face, a back face and respective side walls, a
5 transducer enclosure between said front face and said back face with a transverse partition separating said enclosure into first and second chambers, and a receive transducer for selectively providing handset and handsfree receive
10 functionality mounted on said partition, said first chamber having a plurality of acoustic ports and said second chamber having at least one acoustic port.
2. A communications device as defined in claim 1,
15 said device being a wireless terminal for personal communication systems.
3. A communications device as defined in claim 2,
20 having switch means to select between handset and handsfree receive functionality.
4. A communications device as defined in claim 3,
said first chamber being adjacent said front face.
5. A communications device as defined in claim 4,
25 said first chamber having a smaller volume than said second chamber.
6. A communications device as defined in claim 5,
30 said first chamber having one acoustic port exiting from the front face in alignment with said transducer and a second acoustic port spaced from said first port.
7. A communications device as defined in claim 6,
35 said transducer providing a substantially flat frequency response over the frequency range of 300 Hz to 3300 Hz.

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8. A communications device as defined in claim 7 wherein said frequency response is tailored by electronic equalization.

5 9. A communications device as defined in claim 1 selective ones of said acoustic ports being covered with an acoustic screen.

10 10. A communications device as defined in claim 1 wherein at least one of said first and second chambers contains an acoustic foam.

15 11. A transducer enclosure for use in a communication device adapted to selectively provide handset and handsfree receive functionality, said enclosure having first and second chambers separated by a partition with a transducer mounted on said partition wherein said first and second chambers each have at least one acoustic port communicating
20 with the exterior of the enclosure.

25 12. A transducer enclosure as defined in claim 11 said transducer being mounted on said partition such that sound waves generated thereby are directed into said first chamber.

30 13. A transducer enclosure as defined in claim 12, said first chamber having a first set of acoustic ports generally aligned with said transducer and a second acoustic port separated from said first set of ports.

14. A transducer enclosure as defined in claim 11, said first chamber having a smaller volume than said second chamber.

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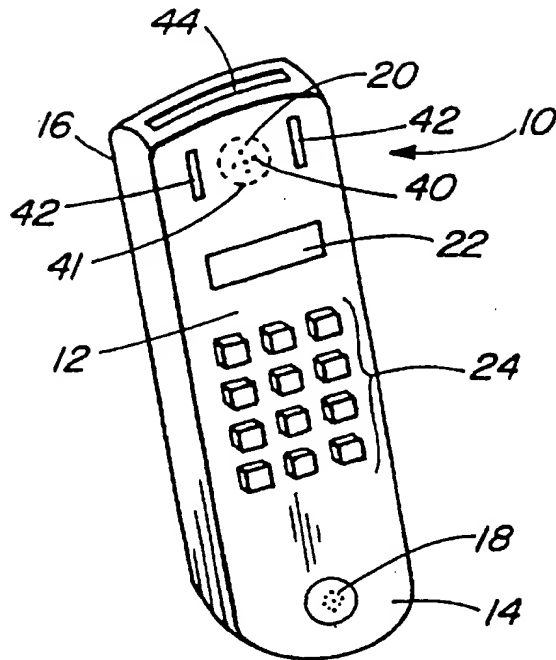


FIG. 1

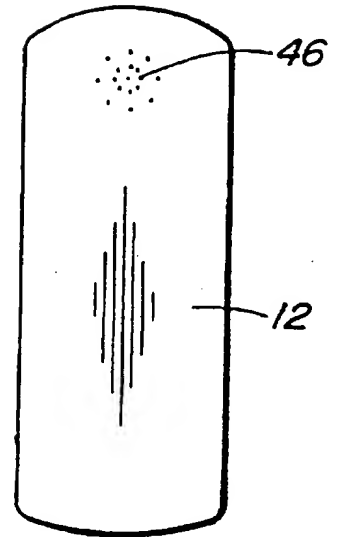


FIG. 2

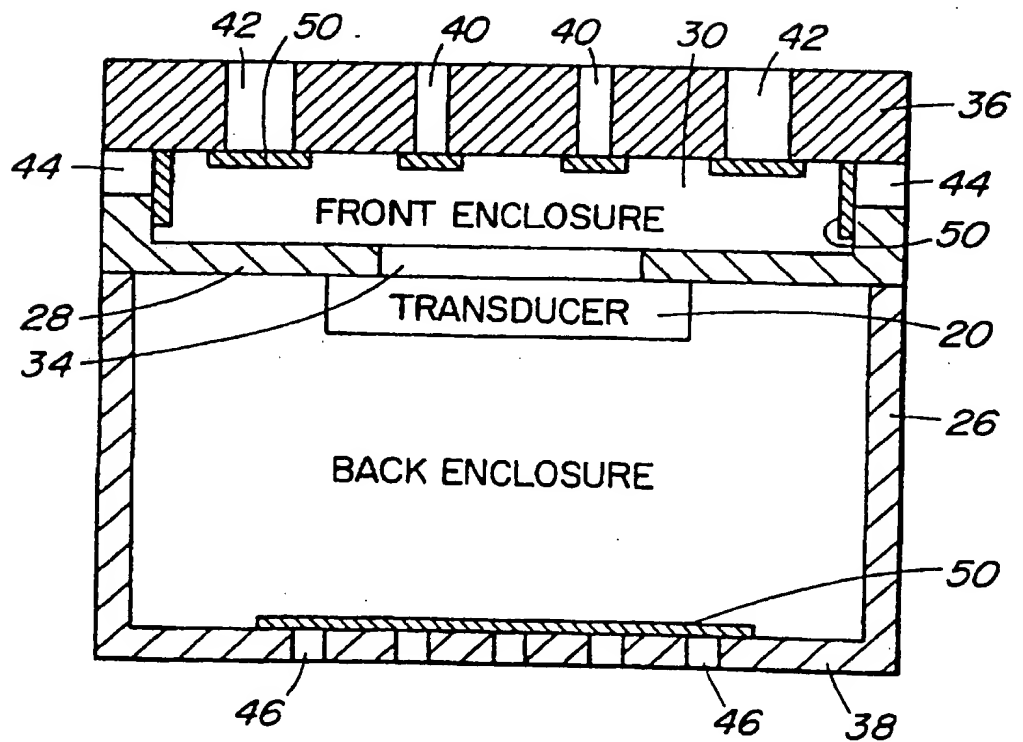


FIG. 3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Internat'l Application No

PCT/CA 97/00379

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US 5224151 A	29-06-93	AU 3515393 A	07-10-93
		CA 2090167 A,C	02-10-93
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		JP 6046123 A	18-02-94
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		JP 7131849 A	19-05-95
		FI 944883 A	30-04-95

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Internat. Application No.

PCT/CA 97/00379

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 H04M1/02 H04M1/60

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC:

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 H04M

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5 224 151 A (BOWEN ET AL) 29 June 1993 see column 1, line 18 - line 57 see column 2, line 10 - column 5, line 24; figures 1-10	1-3,7,8
A	EP 0 283 853 A (AISIN SEIKI K.K.) 28 September 1988 see column 3, line 30 - column 5, line 19; figures 1-4 see column 8, line 56 - column 9, line 52; figures 5,6	1-5,11, 14
A	EP 0 651 546 A (N.E.C) 3 May 1995 see column 4, line 40 - column 6, line 39; figures 2,3	1,2,4,11

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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O document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

P document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

T later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

X document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

Y document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

& document member of the same patent family

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